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Message from the Mayor

On April 6, I introduced the Omnibus Public Safety Act of 2005, a comprehensive piece of legislation that will stiffen penalties for people who commit violent crimes against our most vulnerable citizens—our children and our elderly.

Last year, I promised to fight for a bill that would crack down on youth violence, and I signed the Juvenile Justice Act into law in November. Now, I've sent the DC Council an Omnibus Crime Bill that increases penalties for crimes committed against children, punishes those who recruit kids for illegal gang activity, and establishes sanctions for young people who don't show up for their delinquency hearings.

My new bill also increases penalties for anyone deliberately encouraging children to break the law and makes it a crime to recruit or to coerce others into joining a gang.

Other changes include expanding the definition of intra-family offenses. The bill expands the list of people who must report evidence of child neglect to include school employees and employees of the DC Department of Parks and Recreation. It prohibits the electronic recording of private activities without an individual's consent, and it makes prostitution illegal (currently only the solicitation of a prostitute is considered a criminal offense).

The bottom line is that our young people and our seniors need additional protection against criminals. This legislation gives law enforcement personnel the tools they need to make our communities safer.

The legislation includes provisions that all "crimes of violence" against senior citizens—not just robbery and attempted robbery—are offenses for which enhanced penalties are available. Additionally, the legislation increases penalties for crimes against minors if the crimes are committed by someone who is at least two years older than the victim. The bill creates a mandatory minimum prison term of five years for individuals who commit such offenses while armed.

My bill addresses the proliferation of gun violence in our city by imposing a mandatory minimum of one year for a felon who is caught with a firearm. It increases the maximum penalty for first-time armed offenses to 10 years and prohibits felons from possessing not only pistols but all firearms. The legislation adds public housing to the city's gun-free zones.

The Omnibus Public Safety Act also makes it a crime to encourage someone to join or remain in a gang, to commit certain crimes as a gang member, and to retaliate against an individual for refusing to join or for seeking to leave a gang.



AGENCY WEBSITES

Office of Tax and
Revenue

Department of Parks and
Recreation

Department of
Employment Services

Metropolitan Police
Department

Office of Boards and
Commissions

Commission on the Arts
and Humanities

Department of Human
Services

LINKS TO OTHER WEBSITES

Hands on DC

DC Convention and
Tourism

DC Public Library

DC Celebrates Emancipation Day

As many of our readers know, April 16 has special meaning for the District of Columbia.

On that day in 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Compensated Emancipation Act, for the release of certain persons held to service or labor in the District of Columbia. The Act freed more than 3,000 slaves in DC nine months before President Lincoln issued his famous Emancipation Proclamation.

It was the first time that the government of the United States acted formally to abolish slavery and telegraphed the eventual end of slavery to the rest of country.

The District of Columbia Compensated Emancipation Act represents the only example of compensation by the federal government to free enslaved people.

On January 4, I signed legislation making Emancipation Day an official public holiday in the District. By signing the legislation, I hope to make this day of remembrance a permanent part of our civic culture and an appropriate celebration of those who sacrificed in fighting slavery.

As we commemorate Emancipation Day, we must remember that for District residents, the process of full participation in government is not yet complete. I hope that the time we are setting aside to commemorate this day will help to remind us that even now, our struggle is not yet done.

Each year, our city will hold a series of activities during the public holiday, including the traditional Emancipation Day parade celebrating the freedom of enslaved people in the District.

The Emancipation Day celebration was held every year from 1866 to 1901, and was resumed under the leadership of Councilmember Vincent Orange as a traditional and historic celebration in 2002. For more information about the holiday, please call (202) 727-6306, or visit our city's website at www.emancipationday.dc.gov.

MPD Launches New Police Academy

I've always said that stopping crime before it happens is a collective effort—one that involves a partnership among government, the private sector and the residents across our city. So, I'm happy to announce that our Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), in partnership with the DC Office on Aging, has created a unique opportunity for senior citizens to get involved in making their communities safer: the "Senior Citizens' Police Academy."

The 12-week program gives seniors a chance to learn about the operations of the MPD, develop problem-solving skills, become ambassadors in their communities and volunteer to help prevent crime.

Classes will begin in June and run on consecutive Tuesday mornings for approximately three hours. Participants must be age 50 or older, District of Columbia residents, and willing to complete the entire program and consent to a background check. There is no cost to participate in the program.

When it comes to preventing crime and improving neighborhoods, senior citizens are among our most dedicated and energetic residents. Through the Senior Citizens' Police Academy, we are helping more of our seniors develop the skills and access the resources they need to turn their dedication and energy into action in our communities.

The Senior Citizens' Police Academy was developed along with the Partnership Academy, a crime prevention leadership training program for residents and community stakeholders in DC. Under the program, MPD will register up to 40 senior citizens at a time in courses that help them understand their role in neighborhood safety, as well as the roles of the MPD and other community policing partners. Other courses will focus on building residents' capacity to impact crime and disorder problems and on developing leadership skills for producing lasting change.

For more information, or to request an application form, contact Marsha Hott at MPD, (202) 727-8751, call the Office on Aging's Information and Assistance Unit at (202) 724-5626, or visit www.mpd.dc.gov.



BRC Alerts

DCLMPC Partnership
Works!

DCOA Spotlight on Aging

DHS Outreach

DISB DC Financial
Gateway Express

OAG Inter Alia...

OAPIA Updates

OPGD Grant Funding
Alerts

Shipment of School Supplies to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

On April 7, I joined Baltimore Mayor Martin O'Malley and others to ship school supplies to Ethiopia.

The shipment was the second sent in support of the We are the Future partnerships between Baltimore, MD, and Freetown, Sierra Leone, and Washington, DC, and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The first shipment was sent February 3 from Baltimore to Freetown, Sierra Leone. We Are the Future (WAF) was created by the DC-based Glocal Forum to help children who struggle daily to survive in conflict and post-conflict areas.

WAF's mission is to establish We Are the Future Child Centers in cities striving for stability after years of violence. Six pilot WAF Child Centers have been launched in Freetown, Sierra Leone; Kigali, Rwanda; Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; Nablus, Palestine; Kabul, Afghanistan, and Asmara, Eritrea. Partner cities from the US and Europe help support these centers. These child centers rely on a network of city mayors, World Bank offices, experts and local youth to enrich the lives of post-conflict children through training in nutrition, health, sports and the arts.



Glocal Forum, USA, (GFUS), is a non-profit organization that aims to enhance relationships among cities by linking them to global resources and assets in order to pursue peace and economic development. By creating this "glocal" network, Glocal Forum hopes to create a new balance between the global and the local.

Through the Glocal Forum, all of us are learning the importance of city-to-city diplomacy. The Glocal Forum is a great partner for us in spreading diplomacy around the globe.

In combining resources with Baltimore to send a container full of school furniture and supplies to Addis Ababa, we're setting an international precedent of city-to-city cooperation. Additionally, in an effort to further the relationship between Washington and Addis Ababa, we are formally exploring a "cooperative agreement" between our two cities.

The Way to Work Act of 2005

On April 7, I had the pleasure of touring the Potomac Job Corps Center in Southwest—a free education and training program that helps disadvantaged young people ages 16 - 24 learn a trade, earn a high school diploma or GED, and find and keep a good job.

I visited the center in part to explain the new Way to Work Initiative, which I unveiled in my proposed Fiscal Year 2006 budget. Over the past six years, the number of jobs in the District has grown by leaps and bounds; however, at the same time, our unemployment rate has been rising.

I've always believed that creating great jobs—lasting jobs—for residents is only possible through partnership. At the Potomac Job Corps Center, federal, local, non-profit and private sectors work together to help our citizens in need of jobs.

Two weeks ago, I sent the DC Council a bill as part of my 2006 budget entitled the "Way to Work Act of 2005." With more than \$20 million in new funding, it will help the chronically unemployed get jobs and keep them. In the first year, we're targeting 1,800 people in our most troubled neighborhoods, who, with help, are capable of entering the workforce.

There's another way we're tackling the problem: If we give businesses incentives to set up shop in the District, then they must give back to our workers. For every dollar they get from us, businesses must deposit one half of one percent into a job opportunity bank. We will use that bank to create jobs for the unemployed and to improve the skills of low-income workers.

Among the other components of the Way to Work Act:

- A new living wage requiring District contractors to pay their employees \$10.50 per hour—or \$9.25 with health insurance
- Doubling of our financial commitment to the "Summer Youth Employment Program" and the "Mayor's Youth Leadership Institute"

For more information about the Job Corps Center, visit www.jobcorpsregion2.com.



District Activities



On April 12, Mayor Williams welcomed First Lady Laura Bush to the District's MLK Library, where she read excerpts from *The Enormous Egg* to Maury Elementary School students. The First Lady brought along her dog, Miss Beazley, who is named after a character in the book.



Mayor Williams and Philadelphia Mayor John Street talk baseball during the Nationals' first game and season opener against the Phillies April 4 in Philadelphia.



Mayor Williams toured the Potomac Job Corps Center in Southwest April 7. The center trains more than 700 students ages 16-24 each year and offers high school diploma, GED, ESL, and vocational training programs.



Mayor Williams yesterday joined members of the Washington Senators and players from the Negro Baseball League for a reception honoring past players and the return of Major League Baseball to Washington, DC. Also joining Mayor Williams were Councilmembers Jack Evans, Vincent Orange, and Carol Schwartz (At-Large).

Community News

- [It's National Crime Victims Rights Week: Police Department Offers Resources and Services](#)
- [Mayor Williams Introduces Comprehensive Anti-Crime Bill](#)
- [Statement by Mayor Anthony A. Williams on Death of Pope John Paul II](#)

[View All News Releases](#)



Upcoming Events

4/16	Emancipation Day (www.emancipationday.dc.gov) 11:00 am - Parade Pennsylvania Avenue (Between 4th and 14th Streets, NW) 2:00 pm - Program Freedom Plaza 5:30 pm - Concert featuring Raheem DeVaughn Freedom Plaza 8:15 pm - Fireworks Pennsylvania Avenue, NW near Freedom Plaza
4/17	Ecumenical Worship Service 11 am Simpson-Hamline United Methodist Church 4501 16th Street, NW
4/18 to 4/23	Green DC Week 2005* Various events and locations Contact: (202) 671-1404
4/23	E-Cycling (Electronics Recycling) 9 am – 3 pm Carter Barron Amphitheatre, 16th and Kennedy Streets, NW Contact: (202) 727-1000
4/25	Bilingual Job Fair 10 am – 4 pm Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library 901 G Street NW Contact: (202) 727-3120
4/30	LGBT Citizen Summit (www.citizensummit.dc.gov) 8 am – 4 pm Greenleaf Recreation Center First and M Streets, SW Contact: (202) 727-3000

